

INDIAN TROUBLES.

Change of the National Policy toward Indians.—Gen. Pope's Plan—Its Substance and Advantages.—The Fort Smith Council—Amenity Questions—Savages Near Fort Rice—Briefs from Month—Prospects of Civilization.

ST. LOUIS, Sept. 5, 1865.

The policy about to be pursued by the Government in relation to the Indians of New-Mexico, Colorado, Nebraska, Dakota and Montana, is a matter of great interest to the whole country. It is probably well known to many readers of THE TRIBUNE that since the advent of Secretary Harlan into the Department of the Interior the Government has changed its entire policy in the management of the Indians, & indeed it can be said that prior to that time we had any regular policy whatever in their treatment. The author of this change is Major-General Pope, who studied out the whole question while in command of the Department of the Northwest. Upon the creation of the Military Division of the Mississippi, and the extension of Gen. Pope's authority to the Far West Territory, the question was still further considered by that officer. He was in close and frequent correspondence with the President and his Cabinet. Upon the retirement of Secretary Usher and the accession of Secretary Harlan, the plan recommended by Gen. Pope was adopted and orders immediately issued, to put it in force.

The plan, in substance, is to gather the Indians on reservations and in Colonies, and govern them by the strict discipline of martial law. Each tribe or Government shall distribute regular annuities, and to prevent frauds and cheating the distribution shall be through the agency of the Comptroller General. As far as possible the Indians by whites shall be strictly prohibited, and only half breeds shall be allowed to mingle with them at their abodes. The advantages which it is expected will be derived from this plan are numerous, and many of them are apparent at a glance. It will do away with the horde of greedy subordinates who fasten themselves to the Indian agencies on the plains, and get rich on the pickings and stealings.

It will enable the Government to keep a sharp eye on the Indians, and while protecting them from the savagery of whites, it will likewise restrain their bad behavior by having them open and ready at all times to enforce justice in the prompt punishment of the idle and vicious.

It will teach the Indians to respect the law and they and their children will be addressed to as citizens.

It will give them opportunities to acquire habits of civilization, which, under the old system, was wanting. Of course the plan for reservations and colonies includes school-houses and teachers selected by the Government to instill the rudiments of education into their untutored minds. The success of the plan depends entirely upon the good faith of the military officers appointed by the Government. If they are demoralized and incompetent, it fails; if otherwise, then it must be a success, because the Indians are very intelligent.

The present condition of the Indian question ought to excite the sensibilities of the nation profoundly. There is a strong party, chiefly represented by residents in the Territories, who have suffered from Indian atrocities, demanding their extermination. The defenders of Col. Chivington's massacre belong to this party. There is another party who favor mild conciliatory measures. They are called by the military the Quakers. The policy recommended by Gen. Pope, and now by the Government lies between these extremes. It embraces the strongest sense of force to command respect.

The intention is to enforce obedience on both sides, and then punish the refractory with an unsparring hand. If, after a fair trial, it is found the Indians of any tribe or settlement will not accept the bounty of the Government, then they will be unmercifully threshed till they do. This is the plan in brief outline. A few months experience will develop its practical operation.

In pursuance of the new policy the Government has ordered council to be held at Fort Smith and Fort Rice to con fer with delegations from the chief tribes now arrayed against the Government and lay before them the plan and intentions of the Government. The council at Fort Smith, under the auspices of Commissioner Cooley, is now in session. The initial advice represent that the delegates from the Indians were not as numerous as expected, and it was thought the council would be delayed some time in order to secure a fuller attendance. This council will settle the troubles of the Indians, which arose out of the Red River and other wars, and which they have to thank Almanzo, Newell, and the General will be here to-morrow. Their names are Newton Edwards, Governor of Dakota; Edward St. Taylor, Superintendent of Indian Affairs; Brig.-Gen. Sibley of Minnesota; Owen Gurney of Missouri, and Henry M. Reed of Iowa. These gentlemen have been appointed by the President and Secretary of War to proceed to Fort Rice, under the same general instructions as were given to the Fort Smith Commissioners. They will have a harder task, however, inasmuch as the Indians, who are in the Upper Midwest, are in hostile array against the Government, and will require to be subdued.

Advises of a late date, however, by telegraph, from Omaha, indicate the restoration of quiet and a desire on the part of the Indians for peace. They are far less civilized than their red brethren of the Indian Territory, and will take longer to see and understand what are the exact intentions of the Government in relation to their future. Only a few weeks ago a shooting of a bullet occurred at Fort Davis. That is a good omen, and the Government will rather encourage this exhortation, and probably in the case of the Choctaws, Creeks, Chickasaws, Cherokee, and other kindred tribes, will be more lenient than to those who know the arts of civilization only as a refined mode of stealing from and defrauding their neighbors.

The council at Fort Rice will hardly assemble before the 1st of October. A light-draught steamer, carrying a load of presents for the Indians, and stores for the winter, will be sent from the Boston port of Metropolis on the 20th of September. The Commissioners, excepting Gen. Curtis, are now here, and the General will be here to-morrow. Their names are Newton Edwards, Governor of Dakota; Edward St. Taylor, Superintendent of Indian Affairs; Brig.-Gen. Sibley of Minnesota; Owen Gurney of Missouri, and Henry M. Reed of Iowa. These gentlemen have been appointed by the President and Secretary of War to proceed to Fort Rice, under the same general instructions as were given to the Fort Smith Commissioners. They will have a harder task, however, inasmuch as the Indians, who are in the Upper Midwest, are in hostile array against the Government, and will require to be subdued.

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